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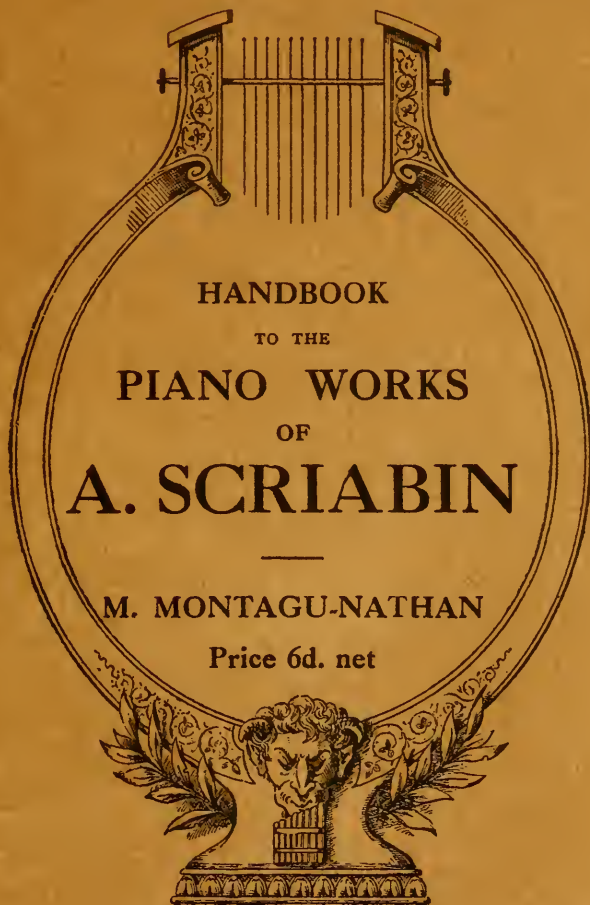
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Handbook to the piano works of A.



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HANDBOOK
TO THE
PIANO WORKS
OF
A. SCRIABIN

M. MONTAGU-NATHAN

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From a drawing by L. O. PASTERNAK.

PREFACE

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WHEN the first edition of this Handbook on the Piano Works of Alexander Scriabin was published we fully anticipated that it would be sure of a generous welcome from the public. Our expectation has been more than justified and we now find it necessary to issue a fresh edition which, we venture to hope, will in some little measure contribute to make the works of the composer still more widely known.

It has been our good fortune to secure a very interesting manuscript page of one of Scriabin's later works, a facsimile reproduction of which has been added to the present reprint of the handbook, thus considerably enhancing its value. The reproduction of the portrait of Scriabin from a drawing by L. O. Pasternak, which already adorned the first issue, has, needless to say, been retained.

Attention must be drawn to the fact that several of Scriabin's piano works, particularly among those published by Jurgenson of Moscow, are unobtainable at present; but as there are fair prospects that they will again become available one day, they are still represented in the Handbook for the sake of completeness. The prices of each work, which were mentioned in the earlier edition, have now been deleted as they are extremely variable at present, and liable to be increased or reduced at any time.

We confidently hope that this handbook, in its new issue, may continue to enjoy the favour of the musical public.

J. & W. CHESTER, Ltd.

London, *March*, 1922.

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THE PIANO WORKS OF Scriabin.



ALEXANDER NIKOLAYEVICH SCRIBIN (1871-1915)

may be said to occupy an altogether isolated place in the history of the musical art. In Russia the nature of his compositions and the philosophical ideology which serves as their literary foundation have aroused discussion so widespread as to recall that which attended the appearance of Wagner on the musical horizon.

He has been conveniently called a mystic, but unless it is understood as comprehensively implying a symbolical expression of mystical ideas, the term can hardly convey to us the full extent of the composer's separation from the ordinary musician-mystic who, while devoting himself to the exposition of a spiritual idea, is content to rely more or less upon the approved musical paraphernalia.

With Scriabin, the process is distinct in two particulars from that employed by other composers evincing a spiritual tendency. From the moment of entrance into his second period his mind was occupied almost exclusively with the problems of psychic evolution, but he differs from the composer of "Parsifal" in that instead of devoting himself to the consideration of the soul of the human individual his concern is with the Universal Soul, which for him symbolises the phenomenon of Creation and, in its application to humanity, the self-assertion of individuality. In his music is portrayed the condition of this Soul in presence of various antagonistic elements, and in that ceaseless creative activity regarded by him as its function. The second point of difference is that his musical substance is something quite remote from the established conception of harmony.

His philosophical programme is not reserved, as is often supposed, to his symphonic works. The "Poem of Ecstasy" and "Prometheus" are not the only evidences of preparation for that "Mystery," the production of which was to have brought, as he foretold, the happiest day in the composer's life. As may be gathered from the pages of this Handbook, it is possible for those to whom both orchestral scores and symphonic performances are inaccessible to trace the development, not only of Scriabin's individual harmonic method, but of his spiritual system, in the piano works—the latter more particularly in the Sonatas.

The piano works are, in reality, more representative of the composer than his symphonic productions. The first orchestral attempt ("Reverie," Op. 24) is by no means as typical of the youth who slept with a volume of Chopin beneath his pillow as are the bulk of the early piano specimens; the last complete orchestral achievement ("Prometheus," Op. 60) does not bring us to the stage of Scriabin's development now regarded as

the mature or post-Promethean period, in which such examples are met with as the later Sonatas and the final Poems, Preludes and "*genre*" pieces.

By means of his piano works we are able to survey from beginning to end the musical and spiritual path trodden by this extraordinary man. And the consideration of his work as a whole enables us to do greater justice to those early pieces which are so often carelessly dismissed as being nothing but a reiteration of Chopinistic sentiments.

In this Handbook an attempt has been made to indicate the growth, from its embryonic appearance, of Scriabin's musical individuality, and, as will be seen, material is to be found in the very first number. And, in fact, it was not until recently, when the work of the composer came to be viewed as a complete document to which nothing could ever be added, that the relation between Scriabin's earliest essays and his final achievements was fully recognised. Having gone through the Scriabin literature in the order of its production, much may be learned, as his friend Sabaneyef points out, by reversing the process.

Until the composer's death, at which time comparatively few of the works composed subsequent to "Prometheus" had been properly assimilated, it was customary to divide Scriabin's output into three periods: the early, or Chopinistic, the middle, or transition, and the third, or Promethean. It is now seen that the "Post-Promethean" works are entirely deserving of a category to themselves.

For those who, while altogether unfamiliar with Scriabin's output, are nevertheless aware that it covers an exceedingly wide field, a rough indication as to style is to be gathered from the editions in which the composer's works have been issued.

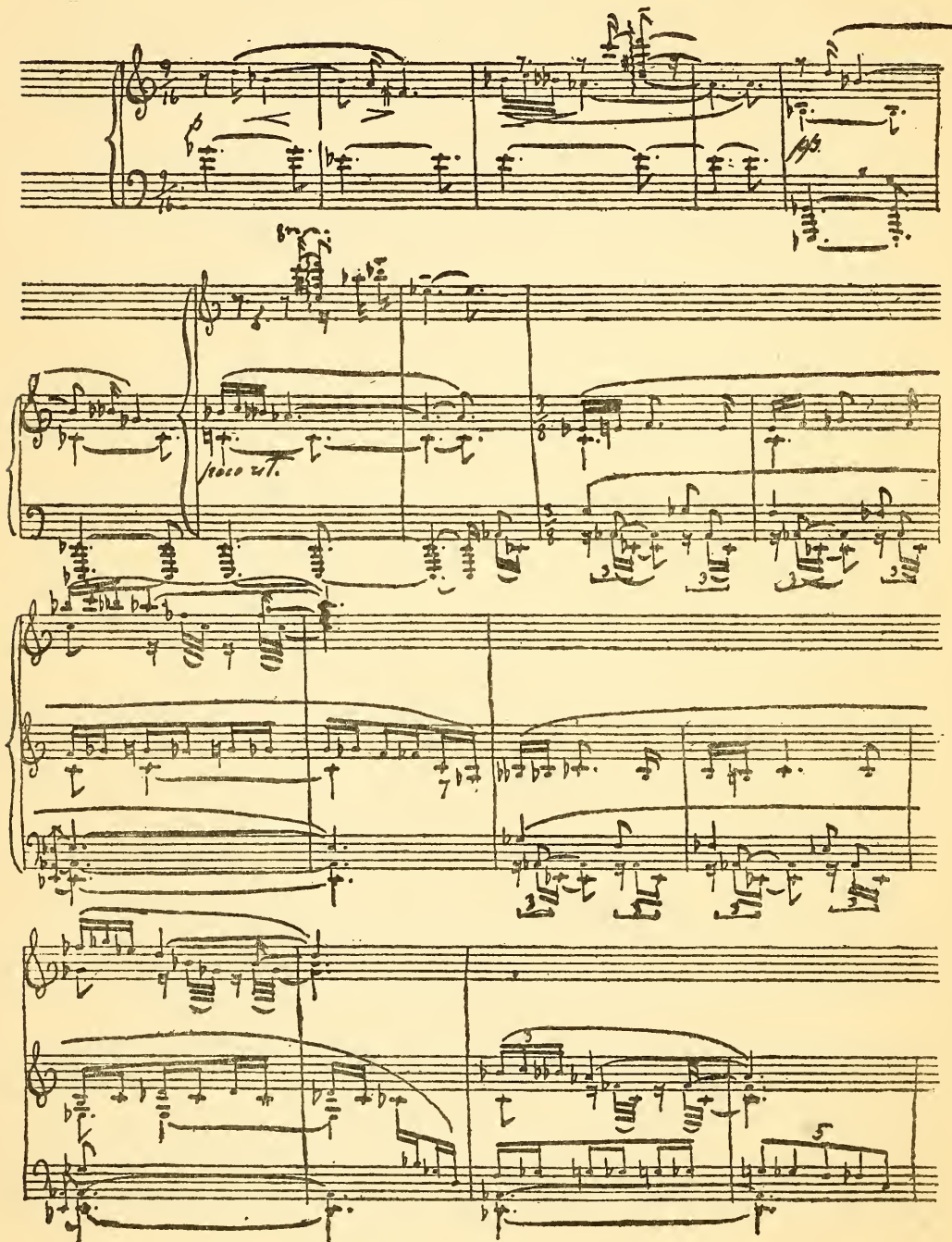
With a few exceptions, the early examples are to be found in the Belaieff Edition; these (the 4th Sonata and the "Tragic" and "Satanic" Poems are among them) are easily assimilated, and testify usually to the influence of Chopin or Liszt. The more individual 5th, 6th and 7th Sonatas are to be sought in the decorative and symbolical cover (designed by Bilibin) of the Russian Music Publishing Company's Edition, as also such typical works of that period as the Poem-Nocturne, Op. 61, and "Masque" and "Etrangeté," Op. 63. The representative post-Promethean examples: 8th, 9th and 10th Sonatas, and the concluding piano pieces are clothed in the simple azure binding of Jurgenson. Needless to say, this is but a rough and by no means an infallible guide.

The present Handbook is based upon the list recently compiled by Y. Engel for the *SCRIABIN* number of the *RUSSIAN MUSICAL CONTEMPORARY MAGAZINE*, and from the pages of that periodical, as also from the monographs by E. Gunst and I. Lipaiev, much information and many suggestive ideas have been derived.

M. MONTAGU-NATHAN.

May, 1916.

Sonate № 10.



Автографъ первой страницы 10-й сонаты.

THE PIANO WORKS OF Scriabin

- OPUS 1. **Valse** in F minor (3-4) Jurgenson, 1893
 At a first glance apparently purely Chopinistic; its 26th and 58th bars are seen, however, to contain the germ of the characteristic chord of "Prometheus."
- OPUS 2. **Three Pieces** Jurgenson, 1893
1. **Etude** in C sharp minor (3-4 *andante*).
 In the B flat minor section occur, in the first and third bars, further hints of the future harmonic scheme.
 2. **Prelude** in B major (3-4).
 Influence of Chopin is here uninterruptedly felt.
 3. **Impromptu à la Mazur** in C major (3-4).
 Promethean chord foreshadowed in 45th bar.
- OPUS 3. **Ten Mazurkas.** 2 Vols. Jurgenson, 1893
1. B minor (3-4 *tempo giusto*).
 First bar (second chord) reveals a "Scriabinist" tendency.
 2. F sharp minor (3-4 *allegretto non tanto*).
 The manuscript in the possession of E. K. Rosenov, at whose country-house the piece was composed, does not altogether agree with the printed version.
 3. G minor (3-4 *allegretto semplice*).
 The modulation to E flat, eight bars from the end, peculiarly Chopin-like.
 4. E major (3-4 *moderato*).
 Attention may be directed to 10th bar of *con grazia* section. Otherwise somewhat commonplace.
 5. D sharp minor (3-4 *doloroso, poco rubato*).
 Writing rather more complicated, but no harmonic advance.
 6. C sharp minor (3-4 *scherzando*).
 Occasionally Schumannesque. The downward passage three bars before *Meno mosso* in G sharp minor sounds an individual note.
 7. E minor (3-4 *con passione*).
 Observe 18th bar of middle section. In 32nd bar of final section an obvious misprint. Some hints of Schumann influence.
 8. B flat minor (3-4 *con moto*).
 Signs of groping after an original method of expression.
 9. G sharp minor (3-4).
 Distinguished in manner, but not distinctive in style.
 10. E flat minor (3-4 *sotto voce*).
 Very charming middle section.
- OPUS 4. **"Allegro appassionato"** in E flat minor (3-4 *allegro appassionato*).
 Belaieff, 1894
 Evidences of Lisztian influence, the more noticeable owing to the rareness, at this period, of any other than that of Chopin. Originally conceived as part of a Sonata.
- OPUS 5. **Two Nocturnes** Jurgenson, 1893
1. F sharp minor (3-4 *andante*).
 Very charming. Penultimate bar strikes a new note, not, however, suggesting later style.
 2. A major (6-8 *allegretto*).
 A little work of much charm and poetic feeling; the concluding phrase delightfully child-like and *naïf*.

OPUS 6. **First Sonata** (F minor) *Belaieff*, 1895
Allegro con fuoco (9-8 F minor); $\text{♩} = 40$ (4-4 C minor); *presto* (12-8 F minor)
 leading to *funebre* (4-4 F minor).

Principally influenced by Chopin. Karatigin sees in the work an indebtedness to Tchaikovsky. Signs of individuality in second theme of *allegro* and certain harmonic features.

OPUS 7. **Two Impromptus à la Mazur** *Jurgenson*, 1893

1. G sharp minor (3-4).

2. F sharp major (3-4).

Chopinesque.

OPUS 8. **Twelve Etudes**. Complete in 1 Vol. *Belaieff*, 1895

1. C sharp major (4-4 *allegro*).

2. F sharp minor (4-4 *a capriccio, con forza*).

3. B minor (6-8 *tempestuoso*).

4. B major (4-4 *piacevole*).

5. E major (4-4 *brioso*).

6. A major (3-4 *con grazia*).

The right hand part in sixths.

7. B flat minor (4-4, 12-8 *presto tenebroso, agitato*).

These numbers show the continued influence of Chopin, but the *meno vivo* in G flat major of No. 7 has a ruggedness foreign to Scriabin's style up to this moment.

8. A flat major (3-4 *lento. Tempo rubato*).

Particularly charming. The embellishment of the first theme, recurring at *tempo primo*, exceedingly graceful.

9. C sharp minor (4-4 *alla ballata*).

Notable for its octave passages—that in the ante-penultimate bar, marked *ppp*, requiring considerable dexterity—its syncopation and the appearance of the three-quaver group, with dotted middle note, to which Tchaikovsky was partial.

10. D flat major (3-8 *allegro*).

A moto perpetuo in chromatic chords with a masterly accompaniment.

11. B flat minor (3-4 *andante cantabile*).

Principal theme reminiscent of second subject in *Allegro* of 1st Sonata.

12. D sharp minor (4-4 *patetico*).

Recurring rhapsodical upward passage recalls mood of first subject of 1st Sonata. Last page apparently influenced by Liszt.

OPUS 9. **Prelude and Nocturne** for left hand *Belaieff*, 1895

1. Prelude C sharp minor (3-4 *andante*).

2. Nocturne D flat major (6-8 *andante*).

Many quite proficient ambidextrous pianists will prefer to use both members in the rendering of these pieces; there is, indeed, nothing in them beyond their secondary description that would suggest that the right hand can be dispensed with.

The rhapsodical manner of the second number may perhaps be attributed to a newly-made acquaintance with the music of Liszt; the origin of the *melismæ* and the *floritura* passages cannot for a moment be in doubt.

OPUS 10. **Two Impromptus** *Belaieff*, 1895

1. F sharp minor (3-4 $\text{♩} = 100$).

The middle section in tonic major possesses a charming lyrical quality.

2. A major (3-4 $\text{♩} = 160$).

OPUS 11. **Twenty-four Preludes.** Complete in 1 Vol., or in four Books ... *Belaieff*, 1897

1. C major (2-2 *vivace*).
2. A minor (3-4 *allegretto*).
3. G major (3-4 *vivo*).
4. E minor (6-4 *lento*).
5. D major (4-2 *andante cantabile*).
6. B minor (2-4 *allegro*).
7. A major (6-8 *allegro assai*).
8. F sharp minor (3-4 *allegro agitato*).
9. E major (3-4 *andantino*).
10. C sharp minor (6-8 *andante*).
11. B major (6-8 *allegro assai*).
12. G sharp minor (9-8 *andante*).
13. G flat major (3-4 *lento*).
14. E flat minor (15-8 *presto*).
15. D flat major (4-4 *lento*).
16. B flat minor (5-8 4-8 *misterioso*).
17. A flat major (3-2 *allegretto*).
18. F minor (2-4 *allegro agitato*).
19. E flat major (2-4 *affettuoso*).
20. C minor (3-4 *appassionato*).
21. B flat major (3-4 *andante*).
22. G minor (3-4 *lento*).
23. F major (3-4 *vivo*).
24. D minor (6-8 5-8 *presto*).

Here Scriabin follows the plan, later pursued for quite a different purpose in "Prometheus," of a progression through the circle of keys. Nos. 2, 4, 8, 9, 17 and 22 recall more or less vividly the style of Chopin. A more individual flavour is, however, to be discovered in Nos. 1, 3, 6, which suggests a sentimental "programme," 11, 12, with its typical melodic figuration, 19, despite its Chopin-like "seventh" leap in the first bar. No. 10 appears to be influenced by Liszt, but possesses a refinement that is not to be traced to that source; No. 16 by the Schumann of the "Kinderszenen," and No. 5 by both these composers. No. 13 deserves special mention as a delightful example of Scriabin's Chopinesque phase. The exquisite transitional passage preceding the final statement of the principal melody and the repeated bass figure which accompanies its conclusion are exceedingly poetical. No. 14 gives expression to the Titanic side of the composer's personality; it resembles No. 6 but is even more forceful, concluding with a magnificent climax. No. 15 is a little gem in pastoral vein, it is a type to which certain later examples of the composer conform somewhat closely. Orchestrated with responsible parts for oboe, cor anglais and viola it should make an effective symphonic miniature. The muttering quavers in the bass of No. 18 help to create the mood of anger which recalls Nos. 6 and 14, but which is here more intense. The end is a veritable paroxysm. No. 20 is reminiscent of No. 12, Opus 8. No. 21 is an effective illustration of the combination of elements marking a transition from the Chopin to the individualistic period. No. 23—a *moto perpetuo* in miniature—is in the style of Nos. 1 and 3, the persistent three-quaver groups being here relieved by an occasional three-semiquaver embellishment. In No. 24 alternating rhythms of 6-8 and 5-8 are employed.

OPUS 12. **Two Impromptus** *Belaieff*, 1897

1. F sharp major (3-4 *presto*).
2. B flat minor (4-4 *andante cantabile*).

The happy choice of appropriate tonality testifies rather to the artistic affinity between Chopin and Scriabin than the former's influence.

OPUS 13. **Six Preludes.** Complete in 1 Vol. Belaieff, 1897

1. C major (3-4 *maestoso*).
2. A minor (6-8 *allegro*).
3. G major (3-4 *andante*).
4. E minor (2-4 *allegro*).
5. D major (6-8 *allegro*).
6. B minor (6-8 *presto*).

A noticeable feature of Scriabin's "serial" collections is their beauty as a whole. Such pieces as these appear to have been written for each other. Thus the calm serenity of No. 1 is admirably, although not violently contrasted with the serious tone of the next number. No. 3 returns to the pastoral style of No. 15, Opus 11. No. 4 is somewhat more strenuous, but No. 5 has the regularity and evenness of a spinning song. The appropriate climactic defiance of the final number is gradually softened into a concluding acquiescence.

OPUS 14. **Two Impromptus** Belaieff, 1897

1. B major (3-4 *allegretto*).
2. F sharp minor (9-8 *andante cantabile*).

Admirable examples of the composer's aristocratic and delicate refinement. No. 1 suggests the tone-picture of a tall graceful flower, bending and rising again in the breeze.

OPUS 15. **Five Preludes.** Complete in 1 Vol. Belaieff, 1897

1. A major (3-4 *andante*).
2. F sharp minor (3-4 *vivo*).
3. E major (6-8 *allegro assai*).
4. E major (3-4 *andantino*).
5. C sharp minor (6-8 *andante*).

A beautiful series. Nos. 1 and 2 are still quite Chopinesque. No. 3, perhaps the least inspired, bears a physical resemblance to Rachmaninov's celebrated Prelude; the mood is different. The light-heartedness of the *Andantino*, No. 4, is possibly a reflection of the composer's environment (Paris). The left hand part, mirroring the treble, forms a useful study. Scriabin's unfailing avoidance of the obvious is shown in the octave leap (tenor part) in the last bar. L. Sabaneyef prettily describes these "exquisite miniatures" as a series of "musical compliments."

OPUS 16. **Five Preludes.** Complete in 1 Vol. Belaieff, 1897

1. B major (3-4 *andante*).
2. G sharp minor (2-4 *allegro*).
3. G flat major (4-4 *andante cantabile*).
4. E flat minor (3-4 *lento*).
5. F sharp major (3-8 *allegretto*).

The wide leaps in the undulating bass of No. 1 and its general harmonic complexion reveal the impress of the composer's individuality, but the poetic feeling savours still of the Polish master. No. 3 is quite in the mood of Op. 11, No. 15, but of larger dimensions. No. 4 is a very charming "*moment musical*" extending to a mere twelve bars—a model of formalistic precision which finds a worthy pendant in the thrice repeated eight-bar statement of the concluding number.

OPUS 17. **Seven Preludes.** Complete in 1 Vol. Belaieff, 1897

1. D minor (3-4 *allegretto*).
2. E flat major (2-4 *presto*).
3. D flat major (3-4 *andante, rubato*).
4. B flat minor (3-2 *lento*).
5. F minor (9-8 *prestissimo*).
6. B flat major (6-8 *andante doloroso*).
7. G minor (9-8 *allegro assai*).

No. 1. appears to manifest a further groping towards an individual mode of expression, again observable in No. 3. The introspective mood of No. 4 strikes a note hitherto foreign to the composer's musical psychology. Nos. 2 and 5 form effective octave studies, the former recalling Op. 11. "*Doloroso*" seems hardly to describe No. 6.

- OPUS 18. **Concert allegro** B flat minor (4-4 *allegro con fuoco*) ... *Belaieff*, 1897
 Contains symptoms of an advance in harmonic thought. Great warmth of colour in the *meno mosso* (D flat major). The heavy octave passages in the triumphant *maestoso* suggest Lisztian influence, but the final page has quite a classical ring.
- OPUS 19. **Second Sonata** "Sonata Fantasia" (G sharp minor) ... *Belaieff*, 1898
Andante (3-4 G sharp minor ; E major)
Presto (3-2 G sharp minor).
 A bold step forward. Individuality of manner clearly shown in melodic contours. The short development of the *andante* is highly poetical and inspired ; in the concluding bars of the movement the composer seems to falter. The turbulence of the *presto* is relieved by a Trio-like middle section of a melodious nature. The Sonata, which was written at Genoa and in the Crimea, has a maritime "programme."
- OPUS 21. **Polonaise**, B flat minor (3-4 *allegro maestoso*) ... *Belaieff*, 1898
 In the G flat major (middle) section there is a decided return to the early manner.
- OPUS 22. **Four Preludes**. Complete in 1 Vol. ... *Belaieff*, 1898
 1. G sharp minor (3-4 *andante*).
 2. C sharp minor (6-8 *andante*).
 3. B major (3-4 *allegretto*).
 4. B minor (4-4 *andantino*).
 In No. 1 is a foretaste of the later mysticism. The melodic line of No. 2 lends weight to the hint, given by such bars as the antepenultimate of the first Prelude, that the composer's individuality is beginning to establish itself. No. 3 is an extremely delicate trifle.
- OPUS 23. **Third Sonata** (F sharp minor) ... *Belaieff*, 1898
Drammatico (3-4 F sharp minor and major).
Allegretto (4-8 E flat major).
Andante (3-4 B major) leading to
Presto con fuoco (3-4 F sharp minor).
 This Sonata is regarded as the culminating point of the composer's first period. Although containing elements amply justifying its description as "the last moment of spiritual affinity with Chopin" (E. Gunst), and some faint suggestions of Liszt, there is good ground—such as the appearance of the embryonic form of the characteristic or "Promethean" harmony—for considering the work as definitely reflecting Scriabin's emancipation. It is said to have been called by him the "Gothic," to be a record of the impression made on him by the contemplation of a ruined castle, but certain features, such as the mood of the last movement, suggest the psychological "programme" which, nine years after the composition of the Sonata, was circulated in the form of poetic-prose on the occasion of a recital in Brussels. The beautiful second theme of the Finale served, we are told, as a lullaby in the composer's home.
- OPUS 25. **Nine Mazurkas**. Complete in 1 Vol. ... *Belaieff*, 1899
 1. F minor (3-4 *allegro*).
 2. C major (3-4 *allegretto*).
 3. E minor (3-4 *lento*).
 4. E major (3-4 *vivo*).
 5. C sharp minor (3-4 *agitato*).
 6. F sharp major (3-4 *allegretto*).
 7. F sharp minor, given as D major in index to volume (3-4 *moderato*).
 8. B major (3-4 *allegretto*)
 9. E flat minor (3-4 *mesto*).
 A series written during the first year of Scriabin's professorship at the Moscow Conservatoire. In No. 2 are some reminiscences of the 3rd Sonata. No. 3 possesses plaintive charm but less novelty than Nos. 5 and 7. No. 9 may be recommended for its beautiful modulatory material and its wealth of harmony.

OPUS 27. **Two Preludes** *Belaieff, 1901*

1. G minor (9-8 *patetico*).

Contains a poignancy of feeling that suggests grief as its inspiration. The harmonic manner is slightly Wagnerian.

2. B major (3-4 *andante*).

A little masterpiece in the style of Op. 11, No. 15.

OPUS 28. **Fantasia**. B minor (3-4 *andante*) *Belaieff, 1901*

In this fine work may be observed the influence of Liszt and possibly of Wagner; that of Chopin is entirely absent. The triplet figure with dotted middle note is now becoming a noticeable characteristic of the composer's melodic line. As to poetic content the work in some respects appears to anticipate the later musical expression of ecstasy. The treatment and the setting of the prominent falling semiquaver figure in the concluding bars seem to warrant this supposition.

OPUS 30. **Fourth Sonata**. F sharp major. *Andante* (6-8 F sharp major) leading to *Prestissimo volando* (12-8 F sharp major) *Belaieff, 1907*

As to form and thematic harmonic and spiritual content this Sonata, composed in 1903, is to be regarded as a direct forerunner of the "Poème de l'Extase." In the first respect it is tentative, for while the movements are united in the poetic sense, they are nominally sub-divided. In the thematic region we have actually the germ of the "theme of ecstasy." The characteristic chord of the orchestral work is to be observed, and in the last particular there is to be noted the employment of themes of psychological import. The Sonata concludes with the orgiastic treatment of thematic material which becomes a feature of the later works.

OPUS 31. **Four Preludes**. Complete in 1 Vol. *Belaieff, 1904*

1. Tonality indefinite. Begins in D flat and ends in C (3-4 *andante*).

2. F sharp minor (2-4 *con stravagante*) (*sic*).

3. E flat major (2-2 *presto*).

4. C major (3-4 *lento*).

A series evincing a curious vacillation between the composer's early and later style. No. 1 contains harmonic features pertaining to the period of the 3rd symphony, but such passages as that marked "cantabile" recall very forcibly the former "Chopinolatry." No. 2 is harmonically less advanced but seems to belong to the programmatic rather than the abstract order of its companion pieces. The concluding bars of No. 3 are peculiarly characteristic of this phase, but the downward-sloping phrases of the brief final number might easily pass for Chopin at his best.

OPUS 32. **Two Poems** *Belaieff, 1904*

1. F sharp major (9-8 *andante cantabile*).

The principal theme of this popular piece is again strongly reminiscent of Chopin, but the transitional passage at the close of the second page could hardly have come from his pen. In the published version are some misprints: the last three notes in the treble of the 9th bar should be a crotchet and two semiquavers; in the 10th the last quaver in the left-hand part requires a natural. As played by Scriabin this group is reversed, thus forming a contrast with the foregoing bar.

2. D major (4-4 *allegro; con eleganza; con fiducia*).

Here are some portents of the composer's future manner, thematic and harmonic. The gradually evolved "theme of ecstasy" makes an appearance, and at the beginning of the last page is heard the ninth with sharpened fifth—a stepping stone to that harmonic region which Scriabin finally reached in "Prometheus."

OPUS 33. **Four Preludes**. Complete in 1 Vol. *Belaieff, 1904*

1. E major (3-4 $\text{♩} = 96$).

2. F sharp major (6-8 *vagamente*).

3. C major (3-4 $\text{♩} = 88$).

4. A flat major (5-4 *ardito, bellicoso*).

A beautifully balanced set. No. 1 is instinct with the serenity of Op. 11, No. 15, and concludes with a particularly charming cadence. Vagueness is well suggested by the unresolved dissonances in No. 2. The brief twelve bars of No. 3 read like a page from the Enigma Variations of Edward Elgar. In No. 4 the principal melodic figure and the harmony of the tenth bar are alike typical of the composer at this period.

- OPUS 34. **Tragic Poem** in B flat major (12-8 *festivamente, fastoso*) Belaieff, 1904
 As to general style this work is plainly influenced by Liszt, but it contains nevertheless some evidences of the composer's original methods in an early stage of their development. The melodic outline is occasionally typical (bars 5-6 and 11-12), and the prevalence of the ninth with sharpened fifth is worthy of note.
- OPUS 35. **Three Preludes.** Complete in 1 Vol. ... Belaieff, 1904
 1. D flat major (3-4 *allegro*).
 2. B flat major (4-4 *elevato*).
 3. C major (3-8 *scherzo*).
 These appear to reflect the styles respectively of Chopin, Wagner and Schumann.
- OPUS 36. **Satanic Poem** in C major (6-8 *allegro*) Belaieff, 1904
 As the title implies, Scriabin has here entered upon a phase in which the exposition of soul-states takes a definite place in the spiritual purpose of his music. It is in this work that he first hints at the satanic or contaminating elements to which the soul finds itself opposed in the process of its evolution; such episodes, which became a regular feature in the later sonatas, are on this occasion indicated by the expression marks *riso ironico* and *ironico*, the former occurring at the moment at which the soul's aspirations are first observed by the powers of darkness. The theme by which the former are typified should be compared with that of the "Poem of Ecstasy." A comparison between the present work and the "Tragic Poem" (Op. 34) will provide an insight into the process of the composer's harmonic evolution.
- OPUS 37. **Four Preludes.** Complete in 1 Vol. ... Belaieff, 1904
 1. B flat minor (9-8 *mesto*).
 2. F sharp major (9-8 *maestoso, fiero*).
 3. B major (3-4 *andante*).
 4. G minor (3-4 *irato, impetuoso*).
 This series warns us that the composer has no intention of excluding either the programmatic or the harmonic elements of his compositions in the larger forms from those of the *salon* order. Harmonically he advances even to the full "Promethean" chord which may be seen in such places as the rather Griegish opening phrase of No. 3. The "literary" element is observable in the moods of Nos. 2 and 4. In the latter the expression of anger somewhat resembles the first theme of the Sonata, Op. 6. The left hand part of No. 1 is typical.
- OPUS 38. **Valse.** A flat major (3-4 *allegro agevole*) Belaieff, 1904
 Despite the presence of advanced harmonies, this piece is reminiscent of earlier days, but we have now to deal rather with a Chopinesque Scriabin than, as previously, with a Scriabinesque Chopin. This piece was for a time a favourite with the composer.
- OPUS 39. **Four Preludes.** Complete in 1 Vol. ... Belaieff, 1904
 1. F sharp major (3-4 *allegro*).
 2. D major (2-4 *elevato*).
 3. G major (4-2 *languido*).
 4. A flat major (3-4 $\text{♩} = 63-66$).
 No. 1 has at a first glance quite a classical complexion; closer scrutiny reveals distinct touches of an individuality which is established in the penultimate bar. From No. 2 one receives an impression as of one who, Satie-like, is experimenting with harmonic effects, but who is unconscious that they have already been used elsewhere. No. 3 is a little Schumannesque. In No. 4 one seems to hear an echo of the final page of Op. 31.
- OPUS 40. **Two Mazurkas** ... Belaieff, 1904
 1. D flat major (3-4 *allegro*).
 2. F sharp major (3-4 *piacevole*).
 Two very delicate, graceful, and individual pieces.
- OPUS 41. **Poem.** D flat major (6-8 $\text{♩} = 96-104$) ... Belaieff, 1904
 Less strenuous than previous works under this heading. Somewhat Lisztian in feeling as a whole but the middle section tolerably characteristic.

OPUS 42. **Eight Etudes.** Complete in 1 Vol. *Belaieff, 1904*

1. D flat major (3-4 *presto*).
The sentiment belongs to Chopin, but its expression is Scriabinesque.
2. F sharp minor (2-4 $\text{♩} = 112$).
Apart from its rhythmic peculiarity—groups of five semiquavers in the bass—a little reminiscent of Schumann.
3. F sharp major (6-8 *prestissimo*).
Quite in the style of the classical prelude; a beautifully modelled work in which no note is superfluous.
4. F sharp major (3-4 *andante*).
A piece well representing the composer's second phase.
5. C sharp minor (12-8 *affanato*).
Here on the whole is the robust Scriabin of the Promethean manner, and little trace of Chopin.
6. D flat major (3-4 *esaltato*).
Opens with a characteristic passage, the harmonies of which form a feature of the whole.
7. F minor (2-4 *agitato*).
Exploits a rhythmic figure of three quavers against four semiquavers.
8. E flat major (4-4 *allegro*).
The middle section recalls the moments at which Chopin indulged in broad impressive passages of rich chords, producing the musical equivalent of a colour progression in velvet.

OPUS 44. **Two Poems** *Belaieff, 1905*

1. C major (2-4 *lento*).
2. C major (3-8 *moderato*).
Against the gently undulating accompaniment the melody of No. 1 ("*le chant bien marqué*") is as though a voice in the desert, the latter giving the pleasanter impression. In the second Poem, which is in excellent contrast, the background is warmer in tone.

OPUS 45. **Three Pieces.** Complete in 1 Vol. *Belaieff, 1905*

1. **Album Leaf.** E flat major (3-4 *andante piacevole*).
2. "**Poeme Fantasque.**" C major (3-4 *presto*).
3. **Prelude.** E flat major (3-4 *andante*).
A delightful set, each number of which might well be described as an album leaf, a title more appropriate than that bestowed upon the second number. Than the opening piece Scriabin surely never wrote a more truly charming or more thoroughly typical page. In the Poème he forsakes the purely poetic and enters the region of fantasy, suggesting by his manner a psychological programmatic basis. In the work of so delicate an artist one looks for the influence of Grieg; from that direction the upward flights "*pp*" in the Prelude appear to have come.

OPUS 46. **Scherzo.** C major (6-8 *presto*) *Belaieff, 1905*
The composer appears here to be hesitating in contemplation of a harmonic advance.

OPUS 47. **Quasi-Valse.** F major (3-4 $\text{♩} = 66$) *Belaieff, 1905*

A sketch for a valse. For the attentive student of Scriabin its harmony will have begun to sound more or less familiar. His attention may be directed, however, towards the curious notation of the sixth bar; the interval E sharp—B double flat, technically a sixth, is here a third; if isolated, the beginning of the sixth bar has a D minor complexion, but, in its context, that of D flat major.

OPUS 48. **Four Preludes.** Complete in 1 Vol. *Belaieff, 1906*

1. F sharp major (3-4 *impetuoso, fiero*).
2. C major (4-2 *poetico, con delizio*).
3. D flat major (3-4 *capricciosamente, affanato*).
4. C major (3-4 *festivamente*).
A very striking series. The impetuosity of No. 1 is introduced at the initial bar by means of a sort of guttural ejaculation resembling in general character the opening of the *allegro drammatico* of the First Symphony. No. 2 is an exquisite little page of eight bars. Rhythmic aids bring to the third number the restless movement implied by its expression-note. No. 4, lacking nothing of the festive, is a thumb-nail sketch of a bacchanalian revel.

OPUS 49. **Three Pieces.** Complete in 1 Vol. *Belaieff, 1906*

1. **Etude.** E flat major (2-4 $\text{♩} = 152$).
2. **Prelude.** F major (3-4 *bruscamente*).
3. **Rêverie.** C major (2-4 *con finezza*)

These numbers are so obviously descriptive that it is perhaps pardonable to refer to a suggested sub-title for the Prelude (No. 2), "Ante-prandial observations of a satyr." The indication "*bruscamente*" is reflected in a passage recalling, as to mood, the opening of the F sharp major Prelude of the previous opus. In the initial bar of the Etude (No. 1) the resemblance is more on the physical side. The Rêverie is in splendid contrast—calm, contemplative, feminine.

OPUS 51. **Four Pieces.** Complete in 1 Vol. *Belaieff, 1907*

1. "**Fragilité.**" E flat major (2-4 *allegretto, limpide*).
2. **Prelude.** A minor (6-8 *lugubre*).
3. **Poème ailé.** B major (2-4).
4. **Danse languide.** G major (4-4).

With this series Scriabin begins the frequent employment of "*genre*" titles. The occasional triplet groups assist happily in the suggestion of the fragile, but sobriety rather than lugubriousness is the mood of the little Prelude. In depicting flight the composer relies, with no little success, on figuration and speed-changes, and the languor of the momentary dance of which he gives but a glimpse—as though between the rise and fall of a curtain—is wonderfully portrayed.

OPUS 52. **Three Pieces.** Complete in 1 Vol., *Russian Music Publishing Co. 1911*

1. **Poem.** C major (3-8 *lento*).

In so far as concerns harmonic and melodic structure this piece is to be considered as the type of its period. In regard to its metrical arrangement, with its almost incessant variation of time-signature, this—as has been clearly demonstrated in an analysis by V. Karatigin—is an excellent example of Scriabin's insistence on clarity of formal design. The Russian critic shows quite plainly that had this work been written in its virtual form of four-bar phrases instead of its actual detailed shape it would have been less easy both to read and to render in accordance with the composer's intentions as to expression.

2. **Enigma** (3-8 *étrange, capricieusement*).

This remarkably fascinating little work, though undoubtedly possessing the "*salon* element" attributed to it by L. Sabaneyef, is allied in more than one respect to the symphonic "Poem of Ecstasy." The rising passages of little leaps closely resemble those which are to be seen in the *Allegro volante* of the latter score, where they represent the "theme of flight." It is interesting to learn that this piece was played by the composer from manuscript during a sojourn in Switzerland, in 1905, to a former pupil, who was asked to guess its "literary" import. "Enigma" had not then been furnished with a title.

3. **Poème languide.** B major (9-8 *pas vite*).

Here are further evidences of the close relationship of this series to the "Poem of Ecstasy," as a comparison of this number with the early pages of the orchestral work will show. At the same time the origin of the first bar of this piano piece may be traced in some earlier and much simpler works.

This group was originally published privately by Scriabin in 1908.

OPUS 53. **Fifth Sonata** (2-4 *allegro impetuoso, con stravaganza*).

Russian Music Publishing Co. 1913

This work represents a very important stage in the composer's development. It was written at Lausanne in 1908, soon after the "Poem of Ecstasy," a quotation from the text of which serves as "motto," and occupied Scriabin only three or four days. Beginning here, the composer discards the formal division and proceeds to model his Sonatas in one connected movement. In the harmonic plan as well as in the method of modulation there is a foretaste of "Prometheus." Attention may be called to the sequence of keys in the working-out section, and further to a misprint in the last two bars on page 16, in which the B (in treble) requires a natural.

OPUS 56. **Four pieces.** Complete in 1 Vol. Belaieff, 1908

1. **Prelude.** E flat major (6-8 *violent, très accentué*).
2. **"Ironies."** C major (2-4 *vivo, scherzoso*).
3. **"Nuances"** (9-8 *fondue, velouté*).
4. **Etude** (2-8 *presto*).

Scriabin has now entered his third period but it is not until we pass from the savagely triumphant page of the initial Prelude to the breathless measure of the second number—an airy trifle that might well have attracted a Nijinsky—that the composer manifests the transition in his harmonies. With the "Nuances" he recalls his former tenderness in music that echoes the mood of Nos. 5 and 13 in Opus 11. The concluding number, a kind of sylph-like *saltarella*, seems to deserve a descriptive or *genre* title.

OPUS 57. **Two pieces** Belaieff, 1908

1. **"Désir"** (12-8).
2. **"Caresse Dansée"** (3-8).

Two very remarkable numbers. The first suggests itself as belonging to the music written with the thought of the unfinished "Mystery," which was to have been the composer's culminating work, in mind. The "Caresse," which would provide something quite expressible in the dance for those prepared for a moment to turn away from Grieg, Chopin and Schumann, has been used as a powerful argument by reason of its apparent inconsistency of notation—in support of the contention that the composer thought in "just intonation" although writing for a tempered instrument. These pieces rank among the very best of Scriabin's smaller creations.

OPUS 58. **Album Leaf** (3-4 *con delicatezza*).

Issued in a Russian Composers' Album by the

Russian Music Publishing Co. 1911

Placed between a charming Polka by Rachmaninov and the Prelude and Fugue contributed to the collection by S. Taneiev, Scriabin's "Leaf" appears the more characteristic.

OPUS 59. **Two pieces** *Russian Music Publishing Co.* 1913

1. **Poème** (6-8 *allegretto*).
2. **Prelude** (6-8 *sauvage, belliqueux*).

By means of the opening of the first and the majestic close of the second, students may easily trace for themselves the very clear connection between the early and later Scriabinist manners. In the "Poème" the composer seems to be hesitating on the brink of the "Promethean" and harmonic method.

OPUS 61. **Poème-Nocturne** (9-8 *avec une grâce capricieuse*).

Russian Music Publishing Co. 1913

In its degree of harmonic complexity this work goes already beyond "Prometheus." Its relationship to the "Poem of Ecstasy," to the "Poem of Fire," and the dreamed-of "Mystery," is established by the frequent use of such expression indications as "*avec une volupté dormante*" and "*comme une ombre mouvante*." The curious scale passages are of course to be traced to the now enfranchised "overtone" harmonic system.

OPUS 62. **Sixth Sonata** (3-4 *modéré, etc.*) *Russian Music Publishing Co.* 1912

This work is in several respects a "milestone." It is the first of the sonatas without key-signature, henceforth discarded; in it, as Sabaneyef points out, the composer brings together two elements hitherto regarded as distinct—those of approved harmony and "timbre"—its harmonic basis being derived from the impression of bell-sounds. Assured as we are that the Sonata was composed as "absolute" music there are in it features to which Scriabin has sanctioned the attribution of a psychological import; among them may be mentioned the unusual expression annotations, such as "*Le rêve prend forme*," and the two notes, B flat and E double-flat, in the penultimate bar of page 5 (*charmes*) here representing the evil influence referred to in the "Satanic Poem."

OPUS 63. **Two Poems** *Russian Music Publishing Co.* 1913

1. "Masque" (6-8 *allegretto*).
2. "Etrangeté" (9-8 *gracieux, délicat*).

The first of these two numbers has a harmonic resemblance to Opus 61 and the Sixth Sonata. In the second, the principal thematic figure of Opus 52, No. 1, is vividly recalled.

OPUS 64. **Seventh Sonata** (4-8 *allegro, etc.*) *Russian Music Publishing Co.* 1912

"In the Seventh Sonata," says E. Gunst, "the mystical element in Scriabin's music reaches its apogee." Dubbed by its composer a White Mass, this remarkable work has points in common with "Prometheus" (thematic figuration, the use of predominating chord, the concluding vertiginous dance rhythm), it is also closely related in its spiritual basis with the "Mystery." Its principal harmonic innovation may be observed on page 1 "*mystérieusement sonore*," an indication which coupled with such as "*menaçant*," "*impérieux*," and the more specifically descriptive "*comme des éclairs*" would appear to warrant the assumption that the soul's conflict with contaminating influences is once again being waged.

OPUS 65. **Three Etudes** *Jurgenson*, 1913

1. B flat major (12-16 *allegro fantastico*, in ninths).
2. C sharp major (4-4 *allegretto*, in sevenths).
3. G major (2-4 *molto vivace*, in fifths).

These three studies are without key signature. Nos. 1 and 2 are exceedingly difficult of execution, but the third is less alarming in this respect, as also in the matter of aural comprehension. The effect of the rising scale of chromatic fifths in an octave setting (last six bars) is exceedingly curious. The enharmonic notation of these studies is not the least of the technical difficulties they present.

OPUS 66. **Eighth Sonata** (9-8 *lento, etc.*) *Jurgenson*, 1913

This is the longest of Scriabin's sonatas, having two developments. Like that of the preceding work in the same form its harmony is complex though founded on a single basic chord. A distinguishing feature here is the flattened tenth which occurring as set forth in the fourth bar has a remarkable effect. There is again an ecstatic dance-like Coda, but a rhythm more definitely recalling an earlier appearance is that of the *molto più vivo*, which appears to be a reminiscence of the Fifth Sonata.

OPUS 67. **Two Preludes** *Jurgenson*, 1913

1. (5-8 *andante*).
2. (4-8 *presto*).

Both are characteristic of the post-Promethean period. The vague and mysterious harmonics of the *andante* are perhaps somewhat less easily to be "focussed" than those formed by the semi-quaver triplets of the *presto*.

OPUS 68. **Ninth Sonata** (4-8 *moderato, quasi andante, etc.*) *Jurgenson*, 1913

The element of the diabolical, introduced in the "Satanic Poem," is given a significant part in the programmatic scheme of this Sonata, which was called by Scriabin a "Black Mass." Belonging to that period which commentators agree in calling the composer's "theurgical" phase, the work refers by means both of its music and its expression indications to the contaminating influence discoverable in some of the earlier creations. The presence of this may be observed in the bass marked "*perfidie*" and "*avec une douceur de plus en plus caressante et empoisonée*." The concluding pages afford an example of Scriabin's practice of enlarging upon a theme until at a given moment it serves as material for a culminating point. Such a process is revealed here in the recapitulation, the climax being reached in the bars preceding the final *allegro*. The theme used is the introductory motive which recalls Debussy's "Nuages" and its Moussorgskian prototype.

OPUS 69. **Two Poems** *Jurgenson*, 1913

1. (3-4 *allegretto*).
2. (6-8 *allegretto*).

A short acquaintance with the first example will serve to dispel its seeming obscurity; the second is a particularly charming, imaginative and delicate fantasy. Especially beautiful are the upward flights at *fin vivo*.

OPUS 70. **Tenth Sonata** (9-16 *moderato*) Jurgenson, 1913

In this, his final work in this form, Scriabin brings about a purification of both the harmonic and the psychological elements. Simpler harmonies prevail, simpler, that is, in structure, and not in their harmonic significance. The process of thematic treatment is reversed, the themes undergoing a gradual abbreviation until, finally, their fragments are employed as material for the climax. Viewed in its spiritual aspect the Sonata is represented as portraying the exorcism of those evil powers referred to in relation to the preceding sonatas. Its musical substance reflects this process in an ethereal purity that contrasts markedly with the empoisoned atmosphere of its precursors. The Sonata received its first performance at Moscow in December, 1913.

OPUS 71. **Two Poems** Jurgenson, 1914

1. (6-8 *fantastique*).
2. (3-4 *en rêvant*).

Of these two pieces, in which the composer is obviously devoting his attention rather to *timbre* than to harmony, the first is perhaps the more remarkable. Despite its decidedly unusual chord-construction the work has melodic features, such as the principal thematic figure, which immediately proclaim it as the product of the Scriabin of the Chopinistic preludes, mazurkas, etc. Attention is called to a misprint in the penultimate line, from the last bar of which a bass-clef sign has been omitted.

OPUS 72. **"Vers la Flamme" Poem** (9-8 *allegro moderato, etc.*).

Jurgenson, 1914

Intended to form part of a Sonata this is easily recognisable, both from its harmonic content and certain externals, as not being a piece of descriptive music in the conventional sense of the term. The Poem is in reality a page rightfully belonging to the record of soul-states penned by the composer in the later sonatas and symphonic works. Hearing the work one could readily believe it to have been inspired by the flaming cover of the "Poem of Fire."

OPUS 73. **Two Dances** Jurgenson, 1914

1. **"Guirlandes"** (3-4 *avec une grâce languissante*).

On the opening upward phrase recalling a similar figure in the Eighth Sonata, the whole of this piece is based. Observing the notation one is inclined to accept the explanation advanced by Avraamov, that Scriabin in his last period, being obliged to write for a tempered instrument, made an attempt to record the harmonies as mentally conceived.

2. **"Flammes Sombres"** (6-8 *avec une grâce dolente*).

This appears to be a piece of conventional descriptive music; as such it certainly succeeds. It was first performed in January, 1915, at a concert in aid of Serbian wounded.

OPUS 74. **Five Preludes** Jurgenson, 1914

1. (3-4 *douloureux, déchirant*).
2. (4-8 *très lent, contemplatif*).
3. (9-8 *allegro drammatico*).
4. (3-4 *lent, vague, indécis*).
5. (3-2 *fier, belliqueux*).

The controversy that has raged (and is still raging) around these Preludes (reminding us of the reception of "Prometheus") has not yet contributed much beyond some bold theorising as to the import of their notation on the one hand, and some expressions of personal taste on the other. Whatever may be their effect after repeated hearings, most of those who play them will, for a time, prefer to extract comfort from the circumstance that this final work has alienated the sympathy of many of Scriabin's whilom supporters.

Nos. 1, 2, and 4 figured in the programme of the recital at which the composer made his last platform appearance. Whether the "complete triumph," said to have been achieved on this occasion, was in any part due to the audience's appreciation of these extraordinary pieces, is not made clear.



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